

ASSOCIATION OF
INDEPENDENT PROGRAMMING NETWORKS
(AIPN)

February 13, 2006

Marlene Dortch, Esq.
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Ex Parte Letter in MB Docket No. 05-311

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Association of Independent Programming Networks (AIPN) hereby submits this letter filing in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the matter of Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992 (MB Docket No. 05-311).

AIPN is a new trade association that promotes the business, legislative, and regulatory interests of independently owned video programming networks. Independent programming networks promote competition and consumer choice, create new markets for video content, expand the diversity of ideas and information in the marketplace, and improve the quality of our national discourse. Founding members of AIPN include: The Tennis Channel, Mid-Atlantic Sports Network (MASN), ImaginAsian TV and The America Channel.

Independent networks seek to supply their products to consumers through all available platforms, including cable networks, DBS, and telephone company networks. Independent networks are platform-agnostic, and do not favor one delivery platform over another.

The AIPN believes that the FCC should encourage an environment that permits new entrants in the video distribution marketplace, such as telcos, to rapidly deploy their services throughout the country. The AIPN believes that new entrants in the market for video content will have significant positive impact on competition, consumer choice, consumer pricing, and diversity.

Since local franchising policies may impede new investment and competition in video services, the AIPN urges the Commission to interpret the Act and develop rules that facilitate widespread deployment of competitive distribution services and investment in infrastructure, while: (a) preserving local government's traditional authority to manage the public streets, enforce consumer protections, and guard public health and safety; and (b) ensuring that any reform of the franchise rules granted to new entrants also applies fairly to incumbent cable providers .

The market entry of new competitive distributors, without unreasonable encumbrances, will provide substantial benefits to consumers and local communities across America. There will also be greater opportunities for independent networks to reach consumers – which in turn will create competition in the content sector, increase consumer choice, apply downward pricing pressure on existing affiliated channels, and improve the diversity of information sources.

We hope the Commission will find this letter useful in its consideration of these matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Association of Independent Programming Networks (AIPN)

AIPN Founding Members:

The Tennis Channel
Mid-Atlantic Sports Network
ImaginAsianTV
The America Channel